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WORLD PACIFIC DIVISION OF EDUCATION

This is a special issue to bring to our readers the texts of some documents highlighting important issues, from recent reports of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, and from other ecumenical bodies.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING, OUTER SPACE, AND DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Statement Adopted by the CCIA Executive Committee
Spittal, Austria, August, 1959

"The CCIA and its parent bodies have frequently spoken on the issues which divide the nations. The following statement is intended solely to direct attention with brevity to some of the more insistent problems of present and urgent international importance.

"1. Nuclear Weapons Testing

"We urge the powers not to resume tests unilaterally so that statesmen may have time to achieve agreements, and the international situation may not deteriorate. A treaty to cease all tests - atmosphere, space, and underground - should be urgently sought not least since it will represent the beginning of specific controls, may lead to verified disarmament, and will help to eliminate dreaded risks to health.

"Tests for peaceful purposes or for more certainly identifying possible underground explosions should henceforth be under international control. In particular, so long as international control is under discussion, powers which have not made tests as yet should not launch them anywhere for military purposes.

"2. Outer Space

"The use of outer space offers to mankind new technical advantages; to benefit from them, the nations must promptly seize every opportunity for peaceful cooperation and agreement. Conflicts in space have not yet broken out but its problems are urgent.

"If chaos is to be avoided, all activities in outer space must be subject to an international rule. There must be equal opportunity for peaceful, scientific initiatives. The military rivalries of earth are too dangerous to project into space.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING, OUTER SPACE, AND DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS (cont'd)

"Therefore the positive efforts of the United Nations to meet these needs should be supported by all governments, especially those who have the largest experience in the problems of outer space. All governments should be prepared to make adjustments in order that international action may be equitable and effective.

"3. East-West Negotiations and Disarmament

"The Churches should welcome the new turn in international events brought about by the decision to initiate consultations on the highest level between the great powers.

"An accommodation of the conflicting positions of East and West will meet with great difficulties. The Berlin crisis and the long negotiations between the foreign ministers in Geneva have confirmed the impression that the Soviet Union seeks a formal recognition and a consolidation of her present sphere of influence in Europe, while the Western powers stand for reunification of Germany and self-determination in Central Europe. These aspirations are mutually exclusive.

"The great powers are nevertheless increasingly aware of the common danger of atomic warfare and the necessity to seek agreement in the field of armaments. The excessive destructive power now possessed by both sides has brought about an uneasy equilibrium. Thus new opportunities for discussion and negotiation are at hand.

"There are tremendous difficulties to be overcome and Christians should be under no illusion. In such circumstances serious exchange of views and negotiations are always to be desired, and all should seek to help and not to hinder them. The Churches should continue to pray and work for peace, justice, moderation, and show a great sense of responsibility in face of an explosive situation."

CESSATION OF ATOMIC TESTS

Statement Adopted by the Executive Committee of the
World Council of Churches, Geneva, February 10, 1959

"Ever since man unleashed the power of the atom, the peoples of the world have feared its threat of destruction and sought the promise which this development has offered. They have searched hopefully, but thus far without success, for steps by which to minimize the danger of war and to release power for peace.

"The Conference on the Cessation of Tests now meeting in Geneva could break the current deadlock. The considerable progress achieved in the technical approach to the detection of tests should now make it possible for political leaders to reach constructive agreements.

"Both the World Council of Churches and its members in many parts of the world have repeatedly pleaded in statements and representations for an approach to disarmament which could start from a controlled cessation of tests. Therefore this Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, currently meeting in Geneva during days which are critical for the Conference, welcomes the efforts to this end now being put forth.

"We realize that the question of international control is the crux. The powers of the control commission, as well as the composition of the inspection teams, are in

CESSATION OF ATOMIC TESTS (cont'd)

dispute. Perseverance in the effort to resolve these difficulties is a responsibility which the negotiating governments bear towards all peoples.

"It must be recognized that any agreement, however carefully framed, involves a measure of calculated risk for all parties. Yet in face of the atomic peril, so fraught with grave consequences for present and future generations, acceptance of such risk is surely justified. Moreover, every agreement is one more step in the struggle to allay suspicion and build confidence.

"To make tests to cease is important in itself. To demonstrate that international controls are feasible in relation to the cessation of testing can, in the long run, prove even more worthwhile in the development of regulated and progressive disarmament.

"In commending this statement to our member churches throughout the world, we urge them to do everything possible to build an informed public opinion about these issues which are vitally at stake and to make such representations to their governments as they deem proper, especially in countries whose governments are directly involved in the negotiations on the cessation of tests. We further request the officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to bring this statement personally to the attention of the heads of the delegations at the current conference - the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States - and to pursue these objectives through every appropriate means."

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ASIAN, AFRICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN DELEGATES ATTENDING THE SALONIKA CONFERENCE ON RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE: July 1959

"Whereas the Christian Council of Nigeria has already written to the CCIA protesting against the intention of the French Government to make an atomic test in the Sahara

"Whereas the WCC has already gone on record as being against all nuclear tests

"We request this conference to ask the Central Committee to protest against this projected atomic test in the Sahara and instruct CCIA to take appropriate action."

RESOLUTION ON ALGERIA

Adopted by CCIA Executive Committee, August 7-9, 1959

"1. /The CCIA Executive Committee,/ welcoming with great appreciation the constitution of the Community which has taken the place of the former French Union and particularly the recent statements of the President of the Community, who has affirmed unequivocally the characteristics of free association which the Community exhibits,

expresses its hope that the relations between the member countries of the community will develop in harmony and freedom on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity,

RESOLUTION ON ALGERIA (cont'd)

and that the churches of these countries will continue to maintain every effort in this direction.

"2. Recognizing the continued deterioration of the situation in Algeria, finds itself obliged:

(a) to take due note of the international repercussions which have already damaged and continue to damage the relations between Europe and Africa, between European countries, between Western powers and finally between countries, members of the United Nations,

(b) to express its anxiety in face of the deterioration in the relations of Islam and Christianity to which the Algerian conflict contributes throughout the world,

(c) to deplore the obstacle created by the Algerian conflict to the rapid realization of France's generous intentions in matters of technical assistance to an economic development of the underdeveloped countries.

expressing its hope for a peaceful settlement of the Algerian conflict by means of free negotiations, affirms its conviction of the urgency of such a settlement and of the short time remaining to achieve it; in default of which international mediation, under any form feasible and acceptable to the parties involved, would become not only unavoidable but also highly desirable,

asks the French churches to exert every effort in support of such a peaceful solution.

"3. Noting the role played by Christian churches and individuals in France in denouncing and opposing abuses of various kinds developing out of the Algerian conflict, assures them of its support in this task of vigilance, of justice and of witness which must be sustained and strengthened as long as the situation requires."

EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, First Assembly, May 1959

The following are extracts from the proceedings of the First Assembly of the East Asia Christian Conference which was convened in Malaya, May 14-24, 1959. This Assembly, to which most of the churches in the area sent official delegations, is sponsored jointly by the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

"1. International Affairs.

"The Assembly received the report of a Commission on 'The Witness of the Churches Amidst Social Change in Asia' and commended it to the member churches as a valuable study document on the problems facing the Christian community in Asia. This report, which can be obtained in full from the Department on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches, 17 Route de Malagnou, Geneva, contained the following paragraphs on international relations.

'The Commission did not discuss, for lack of time, all the international problems of importance to Asian nations and churches. We have confined ourselves to a few problems of special importance.

EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE (cont'd)

'The Church, as a world fellowship faithful to a universal gospel of reconciliation, is inescapably committed to the cause of world community and peace. We are concerned in every constructive effort to reduce the tension between the two power blocs, in the hope that the threat of war may be eliminated and the foundations of a stable peace laid.

'The Commission considered the specific problem of atomic tests and nuclear weapons. This problem cannot be isolated from the related problems of international tensions and the prevention of war, and we recognize the technical and political complexities involved in dealing with this question. The Commission discussed some of the issues raised in the reports of the CCIA and in other ecumenical pronouncements. Asian opinion is unanimous in its protest against the use of nuclear weapons and tests. /Editor's underlining/ This is based not only on the evil effects of the atomic fall-out on Asian nationals but on the ground also of humanitarian concern. We believe that Christian opinion in Asia fully endorses and supports the peoples of Asia in this respect. We hope that the nations which carry on atomic tests will pay heed to the voice of Asia which alone has experienced the terrible effect of the atomic bomb and has suffered acutely the baneful consequences of atomic tests. The churches in the area are unanimous in their desire that, in the larger interests of humanity, the testing of atomic weapons should stop. We hope that none of the power bloc countries will bring in or stock atomic weapons in the East Asian states which are involved in military pacts. We welcome the growth of a new, realistic and dynamic pacifism in the world. At the same time we recognize the fact that the complex situation between the great powers affords no easy solution.

'The Commission discussed other crucial international problems but could not come to any common mind owing to serious divisions of opinion.... One thing however disturbs us. The divisions of opinion among us exactly, or almost exactly, reflect the divisions of opinion at the state level. Christians in all countries tend to identify themselves uncritically with the official views of their governments. The result is an inability to view the issues of international life and relations afresh and without prior commitment. This calls for the growing together of the member churches in the EACC for the purpose of exploring further the Christian criteria of our witness in international affairs. The EACC has a special vocation to exercise the ministry of reconciliation in intra-Asian tensions...'

"2. Population Growth and Family Planning.

"Falling death rates without decrease in birth rates are causing a rapid population increase in Asian countries. This is adding to the strains on food resources and land scarcity in many regions. Rapid increase of population, high density of population and overpopulation in relation to resources all confront the Christian churches with issues demanding positive statements for the guidance of church members and leaders. One of the problems is that some churches in East Asia do not wish to discuss these questions.

"The following might be considered at all levels in the churches: (a)Local, national and regional consultations in which social workers, doctors, theologians and economists participate for study of the issues; (b)Church participation in studies organized by non-church groups; (c)Campaigns under church auspices for the dissemination by competent persons of information about family limitation by ascetic and/or scientific means.

"We affirm that limitation of the size of the family is a decision to be reached responsibly by husband and wife. (It is obligatory on educational agencies in this field to aim their programmes at men as well as women.) There can be good Christian reasons for limiting the family apart from demographic considerations of controlling population. Considerations of family welfare must be regarded as supreme. To belittle the family in the interest of general population control is, by Christian standards, a sin.

"Governments in various Asian countries are giving much time to these questions. In India, Pakistan and Indonesia, the government is taking an active interest in family planning and is promoting research to find new and suitable methods of birth control.

The Japanese government is conducting programmes of public education on birth control and the use of contraceptives. It is to be hoped that there will be such an increased acceptance of this programme that the widespread resort to abortion, either legal or illegal, will be generally discarded as a means of family limitation.

"In connection with population problems the resettlement of peoples as a result of demographic considerations must be studied further. We hope the migration conference being organized by the World Council of Churches will take up this question.

"Industrialization of nations can often so increase their resources that a rise of populations may occur without economic and social strain. The churches must accept responsibility for assisting in such industrialization by supporting related moves for the international control of raw material supplies and freer access to the markets of the world."

"3. Foreign Economic Aid and Technical Assistance

"It is generally agreed that economic development in Asia can greatly be accelerated with economic aid and technical assistance from abroad. The psychological, ethical and other aspects underlying this problem have been well-formulated in many recent ecumenical statements. We recommend for study the Formulation of the Siantar study conference on Social Goals for the New Asia (Siantar, Sumatra, March 1957) and the recent statement by the World Council of Churches (Nyborg, 1958) which show very well the present state of thinking in the churches. Our Commission is in general agreement with these statements."

"4. Religious Liberty /Resolution adopted by the Assembly/

"We, members of the East Asia Christian Conference, affirm the declaration on religious liberty, made by the Bangkok East Asia Christian Conference of 1949, as follows:

> 'The most fundamental freedom is religious freedom. Nations are not truly free unless they recognize that each citizen has the right to decide for himself what religion he will profess, and that each religion has the right to proclaim its convictions without interference. We are glad to find that in most Asian lands these truths have been stated in the national constitutions. We hope that the religious liberty clause of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights will be increasingly acknowledged as the standard of action in this field... But we also are aware that the official acceptance of these principles often goes together with theories and policies which are in fact a denial of religious freedom. We hear of legislation which makes Christian evangelism virtually impossible in certain areas. We hear of discrimination against Christians and of material advantages being offered them if they adopt the

dominant religion of the country. We also are concerned about the trend in certain nations for the state to assume responsibility for the organization of the religious life, which is the province of religious communities and not of the state.'

"As we consider the situation today, we can state the following:

"We are glad that in so many of the newly independent nations of Asia today the principle of religious liberty has been recognized by the incorporation of a statement of human rights in their constitutions. We are, however, aware of tendencies which give rise to concern lest the concept of religious liberty be limited only to freedom of worship, which is only a part of this right.

"It is evident that religious liberty involves our acceptance of the plurality of religions in most nations, and Christians should not in the name of religious freedom claim any right or privilege which they are not willing to grant to others.

"We call upon all men to observe the provisions of the United Nations declaration on religious freedom [Article 18, Universial Declaration of Human Rights, December 10, 1948]:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'

"We understand this statement to include the right of every man to persuade his fellow-man of the truth of his convictions and to render public witness to his faith, and the right of the Church to evangelize those who are willing to listen to its message.

"Even where adequate safeguards of religious liberty are provided by law, they may in fact be nullified by the pressures of the social environment, community and family life. We have the task to convince all sections of our people that for the sake of true freedom and the dignity of man and for the sake of developing true responsibility, it is necessary that every man should be given full freedom to make his own religious choice, for, in the last analysis, true human freedom and its preservation depend on the right of everyone to decide in matters of conscience and religion.

"Consideration of religious liberty raises the question of the relation between religion and the state. It is conceded that some limitation of religious liberty is necessary in the interest of public order, health and morality. Beside this in the relations between religion and state... three distinct patterns are discernible: the secular state, the neutral state which supports all religions, and the state which adopts the religion of the majority as the state religion.

"Any one of these three may be compatible with the preservation of true religious liberty, provided: (a)state embody fundamental rights of the human person including religious liberty clearly in its legal system and ensure their observance in practice; (b)it is recognized that the religious freedom is anterior and superior to the state's power, and that it is presumptuous for the state to assume that it can grant or deny fundamental rights."

"5. Committee on International Affairs & Religious Liberty

"The Assembly established a Committee on International Affairs and Religious Liberty responsible to its continuation committee and with the following terms of reference:

1. to stimulate study and thought on international affairs, human rights and religious liberty including missionary freedom in the churches of the region, and to encourage the establishment of national commissions of the churches on international affairs and religious liberty;

2. to work in cooperation with the CCIA to improve the links between the CCIA and the churches of East Asia for their mutual advantage;

3. to explore and where appropriate, to suggest action to CCIA with reference to international problems distinctive to the region as a whole, problems which are common to all nations and people such as, disarmament, world peace, etc.

4. to represent in cooperation with CCIA Asian Christian opinion concerning problems of the area to the political authorities inside and outside of the Asian area and to advise the churches in the area on their responsibility in all these matters;

5. to study the idea and practice of religious liberty in Asian countries;

6. to formulate the Church's task for the promotion of true religious liberty;

7. to suggest to the EACC ways and means of helping the churches and National Christian Councils in fulfilling the same in their respective countries.

"The Right Reverend Bishop R.B. Manikam of India was appointed Chairman of this Committee and the Reverend U. Ba Hymin of Burma was appointed Secretary."

OVERSEAS CHURCHES WATCHING THE U.S. CHURCHES' NATIONWIDE PROGRAM FOR PEACE

Just as the concerns of people overseas are studied by U.S. Christian leaders, so also are the activities of Christian Churches of the United States studied and observed by Christian leaders in other countries.

Christian leaders overseas are indicating their interest in the Nationwide Program for Peace, now being undertaken by the churches in the United States, sponsored across the 50 states of the U.S.A. by the Department of International Affairs in cooperation with the denominations and the state and local councils of churches. Leadership Training Seminars are being held in the first period, June-December 1959, and meaningful programs of study and action for peace are being encouraged for every possible local church from January-June 1960.

The Report (35¢ per copy) and Study Guide (25¢ per copy) for "Christian Responsibility on a Changing Planet" focus attention on many questions which concern people overseas as well as people in the United States. These and other publications related to the Nationwide Program for Peace--such as the descriptive booklet, "The Nationwide Program of Education and Action for Peace," on the purpose, organization and methods of the program and a periodic Bulletin with program information and progress reports from around the country--may be obtained from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

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